

UTAH DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUP MEETING

October 6, 2008

Present: Craig Burr, Chair; Sandi Errigo, Jerry Pope, Amanda Thompson, Lisa Fine, Norma Bench, Roy Drodgy, Ann Stevenson, DeNorris Bradley, Will Carlson, Dave Calder

Special Guest / Speakers:
Dave Calder, UCI/Commissary

Welcome:
Craig Burr welcomed those in attendance and introductions were made around the table.

Minutes of Last Meeting:
Approved

Agenda:
Dave Calder, from UCI/Commissary, was the invited speaker. The commissary is a service that provides products that the department does not supply to inmates. With these products, inmates may augment their daily meals and personal needs. The commissary is now called the centralized canteen. This terminology is used because it supplies other locations besides Draper, as opposed to each location stocking their own commissary.

The centralized canteen is part of UCI, and began service July 1, 2003. Correctional Industries is self-funded, with all revenues being put back into UCI and dispersed as needed. Profits are returned to inmates in the form of fund infusion into any UCI program in need of additional monies. Currently the prison is working with others in developing a licensed apprenticeship program in UCI areas such as plumbing, electrical, construction, culinary, printing, and machinist. This program would make inmates more marketable upon their release.

Roy Drodgy suggested that it might be a good idea to inform inmates of how commissary revenues are spent. If they knew that these funds were being put back into programs for offenders, they would be less likely to complain about the cost they are being charged for commissary items. Inmates feel that prices of commissary commodities should not be raised in view of the fact that their salaries have not been raised in the last 15 years and jobs are being cut. However, Craig Burr pointed out that vendors have raised prices on their products in a ripple effect of the rising cost of gasoline. Dave explained that many state correctional facilities use only a single national supplier, which caters to corrections, for all of their commissary items. Their set prices become the benchmark. This does not allow correctional facilities to get the best prices, which drives up the cost to offenders. Our commissary uses both local and national vendors in order to keep prices as competitive as possible. Special dietary needs (health and religious) are met by culinary

through daily meals and inmates are not required to purchase items from commissary to meet such requirements.

Job opportunities for offenders within the institution have been adjusted so that each inmate has only one job, allowing work positions to be available to a much greater number. In the developing apprenticeship program, there will be a graduated pay scale. For example, inmates might begin the program at 40 cents an hour, be moved up to 60, then 80 cents an hour as their experience and expertise increases.

Commissary supplies for indigent offenders was discussed. The suggestion was made that indigent inmates receive a few commissary items in addition to what they are currently getting.

Norma Bench asked if there was any kind of Christmas project that could be done for offenders. She suggested the possibility of doing something each Tuesday for inmates being released. Sending Christmas cards to inmates is a common request made by outside groups. They would need to be supplied with names and USP numbers. Craig felt it would be better for inmates who wanted to receive cards to voluntarily give this information so that offenders who did not desire to participate would not be contacted.

Craig Burr presented a summary of the recent legislative session in which new budget cuts were implemented. Each division director was instructed to present a proposed budget reflecting a 1%, 3%, and 5% cut in their spending. The DORA program, which provides security and substance abuse treatment, was not cut. Ann Stevenson requested that the group be provided with statistics on the number of offenders treated under the DORA program and the number of slots being made available. *Craig will bring this information to our December meeting.* Most of the reductions came in the area of supervisory positions, freezing open positions, and volunteer retirements. Programming was required to cut some contracts with private providers, mostly at day reporting centers. An attempt will be made to compensate for these cuts by adjusting services provided inside the prison. We are gearing up for the January legislative session and it is possible that we will see even more cuts at that time.

Funding for the 300-bed parole violator center in Salt Lake has been reduced for fiscal year 2009. This will be a privately run facility for which the prison was scheduled to provide training.

Questions regarding communication between the prison personnel and staff of outside facilities (halfway houses, day centers, etc) were fielded by Craig Burr.

Discussion was held on some of the helps available for inmates who are about to be released. LDS Social Services has a program in place to aid offenders in job searching. Each inmate will be given a folder with instructions on how to obtain a copy of their birth certificate, social security card, etc. so that this can already be done by the time they are released. These fees, however, will be paid by the individual inmate. All such documents will be held in the records office until the offender's release date.

Larry Busio will speak at our December meeting on visiting regulations. A suggestion for our next meeting was the subject of medical co pays, and in February, the YPREP program.

Next Meeting:

The next FOCUS meeting will be held Monday, December 1, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in the Region III Adult Probation & Parole office, 36 West Fremont Ave. (1100 South), Salt Lake City, Utah.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.